

Critical Coastal Areas  
Information Exchange Forums  
Summer 2003

Forums will be held twice in most locations:  
2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
Please check the CCA website for details.

Central Coast

- \* Tues. June 17 San Luis Obispo
- \* Thurs. June 19 Moss Landing
- Contact Ross Clark (831) 427-4873  
rclark@coastal.ca.gov

San Francisco Bay Area

- \* Tues. July 1 San Francisco
- \* Wed. July 2 Point Reyes
- Contact Derek Lee (415) 904-5270  
derek1@coastal.ca.gov

South Coast

- \* Tues. July 15 Orange County
- \* Wed. July 16 San Diego
- \* Thurs. July 17 Los Angeles
- Contact Tracy Duffey (805) 585-1809  
tduffey@coastal.ca.gov

North Coast

- \* Tues. July 29 Mendocino County
- \* Thurs. July 31 Humboldt County
- Contact Vanessa Metz (707) 445-5345  
vmetz@coastal.ca.gov

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www.coastal.ca.gov/nps/cca-nps.html

Partnering to Protect Our Coastal  
Waters from Polluted Runoff

Partnering to Protect Our  
Coastal Waters from  
Polluted Runoff

California's  
Critical Coastal  
Areas Program



California Coastal Commission  
State Water Resources Control Board  
and Partners:  
Regional Water Quality Control Boards  
California Coastal Conservancy  
California Dept. of Fish & Game  
California Dept. of Parks & Recreation  
California Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection  
S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Comm.  
State Lands Commission  
CalTrans  
Ocean Conservancy  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

California's Critical Coastal Areas Program

The Problem of Polluted Runoff

Throughout California's diverse 1,100 mile coast, there is a growing awareness of the problem of polluted runoff in our coastal waters—our rivers and estuaries, lakes and lagoons, bays and ocean.

Polluted runoff is generated by a variety of land use activities, including urban development, agriculture, and forestry.

Many of our coastal waters are degraded or threatened by polluted runoff—also known as nonpoint source (NPS) pollution—which harms aquatic ecosystems, public health, and the local economy.

Seeking Solutions to Pollution

What's being done to find solutions to polluted runoff along California's coast?

A myriad of local and regional interest groups are active in water quality protection and restoration efforts in coastal watersheds.

Many cities have urban runoff control programs, and at least 28 state agencies have responsibilities in carrying out the state's plan for controlling NPS pollution (NPS Plan).

The CCA Program

The Critical Coastal Areas (CCA) Program of the NPS Plan is an innovative program to foster collaboration among local stakeholders and government agencies, to better coordinate resources and focus efforts on coastal-zone watershed areas in critical need of protection from polluted runoff.

A multi-agency statewide CCA Committee has identified an initial list of 101 CCAs along the coast and in San Francisco Bay.

CCA Action Plan

Beginning with four pilot CCAs, the CCA Program will form teams of local stakeholders (watershed groups, special interest organizations, and community members) and government agencies (state, federal, and local) to develop community-based CCA Action Plans for addressing polluted runoff that threatens coastal resources within these CCAs.

The Action Plan will integrate and build on existing local watershed protection and restoration efforts, identify needs and available resources, focus the attention of responsible agencies, and coordinate with other relevant water quality protection programs.

# California's Critical Coastal Areas Program

## How Are CCAs Identified?

The CCA Committee selected initial criteria for identifying CCAs, resulting in the current (2002) list of 101 CCAs. The Committee, with public input, will revise the CCA list periodically. The next revision is scheduled for 2004.

The identification criteria reflect the dual goals of improving degraded water quality, and providing extra protection from polluted runoff to marine areas of high resource value.

The CCA Program relies on these existing state designations of:

- **Degraded water quality**—Impaired and threatened waters on the Clean Water Act 303(d) lists.
- **Marine and estuarine areas of high resource value**—Marine Managed Areas (including State Water Quality Protection Areas), and equivalent areas specified in the San Francisco Bay Plan.

## CCA Boundaries

The inland boundary of a CCA is the Coastal Zone (as defined in the Coastal Act), but planning efforts may extend farther inland. Boundaries along the shoreline will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

## CCA Identification Criteria

Four criteria are currently used to identify CCAs.

- The 25 original CCAs identified in 1995—based on the 303(d) list at that time—as:
  - 1) **Coastal-zone watershed areas that drain into impaired waters.**
  - 2) **Coastal-zone watershed areas where impaired waters flow into Marine Managed Areas;** and
  - 3) **Shoreline areas within San Francisco Bay where impaired waters flow into wildlife refuges, waterfront parks, and beaches.**
- To better protect marine areas of high resource value that are not yet impacted by polluted runoff, the 2002 CCA list added:
  - 4) **Coastal-zone watershed areas that drain into State Water Quality Protection Areas (formerly Areas of Special Biological Significance, ASBSs).**



*Above: The Klamath River estuary, California's northernmost Critical Coastal Area. Photo by Tupper Blake, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Cover: Morro Bay, a 1995 CCA Program success story. Copyright © 2002-2003 Kenneth Adelman, California Coastal Records Project.*



*San Diego-La Jolla Ecological Reserve, a South Coast CCA. Copyright © 2002-2003 Kenneth Adelman, California Coastal Records Project, [www.californiacoastline.org](http://www.californiacoastline.org)*

## How Does the CCA Program Work?

The CCA Program is a non-regulatory planning tool to coordinate the efforts of multiple agencies and stakeholders, and direct resources to CCAs. The program's goal is to ensure that effective management measures are implemented to protect or restore coastal water quality in CCAs. CCA identification supports the acquisition of grant funding by prioritizing protection efforts.

## How Will Pilot Projects be Selected?

With input from local stakeholders, regional committees will select one CCA as a pilot project in each of four regions of the coast:

- **North Coast** (Sonoma County & north)
- **San Francisco Bay Area**
- **Central Coast** (Santa Cruz through Santa Barbara counties)
- **South Coast** (Ventura County & south).

Pilot projects will be selected where water quality will benefit most from Action Plan implementation. The lessons learned from these pilot projects will be applied to CCAs throughout the coast.

## How Can You Participate?

### • Information Exchange Forums

Join us for one of the Information Exchange Forums taking place along California's coast this summer. These forums will introduce the CCA Program to the public, and invite participation by community members and other interested stakeholders. (See next page for forum locations).

At each forum we will explain how the CCA program works, the criteria used to identify CCAs, the procedure for revising the CCA list, and the pilot project selection process.

### • "State of the CCA" Surveys

Let us know about the water quality and land use issues in your CCA's watershed, by providing information for "State of the CCA" surveys. These surveys will help determine what resources are needed to protect or restore water quality in each CCA, and identify efforts already underway.

### • Pilot Project Selection Workshops

A follow-up workshop will be held in each region this fall, to present the "State of the CCA" results, and to encourage public involvement in selecting a pilot project and forming a CCA Action Plan team.

Please visit the CCA website for more information, including a list and maps of the CCAs, the CCA Strategic Plan, and a CCA Action Plan outline.

[www.coastal.ca.gov/nps/cca-nps.html](http://www.coastal.ca.gov/nps/cca-nps.html)

*Partnering to Protect Our Coastal Waters from Polluted Runoff*